

# TAXI

An Adventure Romance

By George Agnew Chamberlain

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### SYNOPSIS.

PART I.—Robert Hervey Randolph, young New York man-about-town, leaves the home of his sweetheart, Madge Van Teller, chagrined because of her refusal of his proposal of marriage. His income, \$10,000 a year, which he must surrender to a certain Miss Imogen Pamela Thornton (whom he has seen only as a small girl ten years before) is found, is not considered by the girl of his heart adequate to modern needs. In a "don't care" mood Randolph enters a taxi, unseen by the driver, and is driven to the stage door of a theater. A man he knows, Duke Beamer, induces a girl to enter the cab. Beamer, attempting to follow, is pushed back by Randolph and the cab moves on. His new acquaintance tells Randolph she is a chorus girl, and has lost her position. She is in distress, even hungry, and he takes her to his apartment. There, after lunch, a chance remark convinces him the girl is the missing Pamela Thornton. He does not tell her of her good fortune, but secures her promise to stay in the flat until the morning, and leaves her, in a whimsical mood, also realizing that the girl's reappearance has left him practically penniless, he bribes the taxi driver to let him make his job, and leaving word with the legal representative of the Thornton estate where he can find Pamela, takes up his new duties under the name of "Slim Hervey." He loves the girl, but his pride forbids him approaching her under their changed conditions.

About this time a series of coincidences befell the young and fevered Fair of the city of New York which would have given pause to the persons involved had they been able to get together and compare the dope. Take what happened to Miss Georgiette Hattone. Her people had played in hard luck and died. George had secured a job and was doing pretty well at it until young Doctor Bones met her and gradually persuaded her that she was threatened with galloping consumption. Once he had frightened her, the rest looked easy; he would take her out of bad ventilation into his run-about and the open-air—out of the goodness of his heart and the fullness of his purse, he would take care of her.

He began by leading her to a Netherland Show and supper afterward. They danced a little and for the first time in her life, but under medical advice, she took something in the way of stimulant after the initial pretty cocktail. They issued from supper and it was when Mr. Chauffeur Slim Hervey heard the whispered address that the game became a threesome.

Counting upon the abstraction, or rather, the concentration of his fares on interior fittings, Driver Hervey soon switched his cab from the chartered route and made for downtown through silent back streets. In just ten minutes he drew up at an old-fashioned house in a very quiet square, shut off his engine to the idle and waited. Not for long. Out of the cab came a blasphemous exclamation in medical tones and with it a cry of awakening from Georgiette. Through one window she looked upon the home of her childhood; through the other upon that happy ruffled garden-square, which was the umbrageous garner-close of all her dearest, purest and dreamiest memories.

"Oh!" she gasped. "No, you mustn't scold him. This is just where I want to get out and walk. It's—it's extraordinary." Then from the curb, "I may be going to die of consumption, doctor, but, after all, I'd rather—rather die that way."

Twist things around a little and you'll get what happened to Miss Terry de Guest with the difference that that beautiful and hungry young woman who had all but turned her back on Settlement work and her face to the Great White Way, suddenly awoke not in the moonlit embrace of Clairmonte, but before the accusing face of a House in Henry street.

Nor was Mr. Slim Hervey partial to sex in salvation. There was the instance of young Bertram Blossome who shame-facedly hurried into his cab a painted, wan-faced wail of the street with self-accusing eyes. No case this of hunted and hunter—rather two strayed bits of weak humanity driven before the unleashed dogs of poverty and lust. How readily and unquestioningly the boy slipped from the cab at his home address, miraculously confused almost as by the meddling finger of God with one very different! How gratefully the girl took the possible fare and "something over," and how her tears brimmed when ten minutes later the blue-eyed chauffeur a wage-earner like herself, said: "Nothing doing, Sister. The ride is on me," and promptly whirled away!

While all these incidents were engaging each in its own way, and showed a reasonable profit to all concerned, Mr. Randolph looked upon them more or less as a means of getting in his hand during a period of initiation. Once he felt sure of himself and of his new chauffeur point of view and attitude toward the gay world from the under side, he began to haunt the neighborhood of East Ninth street at the hour when dinners are plenty and taxis scarce.

Twice he saw Miss Madge Van

Teller, carried on in Somebody's private car, but he was not discouraged for he recognized in the very fact of that public privacy the badge of preliminary earnings. In due course his night and hour came. He was called by the arriving Mr. Beacher Tremont and ordered to stand by; twenty minutes later he was listening to that gentleman explaining to Miss Van T. that a cylinder had gone wrong on his own car at the last moment.

Miss Madge Van Teller, upon whom Mr. Randolph had not laid eyes since the very definite parting of their ways on the rock of ready cash, was more beautiful tonight than at any other time since the evening of her coming-out party. The reason was one and the same. Tonight, as upon that other, she stood within a threshold and peered out on Life with a big L. A flame was in her cheeks and in her eyes; her lips were half-parted and thirsty, her bosom agitated. She was divinely dressed.

They were very silent on their way to dinner at the Knickerbocker, but they exuded an aura of tense expectancy that made nothing of the glass barrier between them and the car pilot, who soon felt himself lifted and carried on its wave. Something was cooking beyond a doubt and he then and there determined to stick a fist through the crust of the pie just before the smell of burning.

There is nothing more stereotyped than a night run before the fever hounds of New York. It is invariably a four-act play that starts with a single cocktail and a tasty dinner, goes on to a show peppered with double meanings, thickens at the cabaret in the close harmony of booze and dance music and finally bursts "somewhere in the country."

The first act was easy for Randolph; he went on with the villain and the leading lady, but once the revolving door of the hotel had clucked on the wings and he had to withdraw to the wings and dope out a means of evolving from a super into a star of the first magnitude. He decided that it didn't much matter who wanted the couple from dinner to the show, but that the next ent'act would hold the crux of the night's entertainment, for the cab that secured the freight for the cabaret would stand a good chance of sailing it after the ball.

Consequently he was content to pick up a gutter-snipe and then trail his prey to the theater. "Then is the two," he said to his ally, suborned with the promise of two bits, cash on delivery, "the John with the high hat and the dream-dame in smoke-colored chiffon."

"That's some name for a skirt, Cap," said the extreme youth admiringly, "an' some skirt, believe me. Nor I won't forget 'em."

And he didn't. No sooner had Mr. Beacher Tremont, bearing a thistle-down burden on his arm, swelled out from the theater with the anxious look on his face of a man with three cars in the garage at home and no call number in his left hand waistcoat pocket, than the tmp was at his side. "Say, mister, wapter taxi? Got one at the head of the line that I'd give up just to youse for a dime."

"Lead me to it," said Mr. Tremont. "Say," said the snipe to Randolph as the car jumped, "I've took the boss inside on fer a friend. You watch yeself."

It was a short run to the lair of the Midnight Rolie, but Mr. Randolph was not surprised at the double wage he received for the murmured conversation that accompanied it. "Fiji



"Wait for Me at the Seventh Avenue Northeast Corner. Get Me?"

up your gas tank and wait for me at the Seventh Avenue northeast corner. Get me?"

"Sure," granted Mr. Randolph. "Where to, mister?"

"Greenwood hostelry," breathed the villain.

"I'm on," said Mr. Randolph, ran his car to the comfortably quiet nook designated, dug out a road map of Manhattan and vicinity, scrutinized it carelessly and settled down to meditate.

To a select and once affluent few the name of the G. hostelry above mentioned will bring certain vivid recollections and will also place the chronology of this yarn, for the said abode of revelry was too good to last very long; it choked to death on its own popularity and consequent publicity. From the outside, even in its hey-day, it presented a most innocuous appearance, just a renovated farmhouse standing under a clump of veil-

ing sugar-maples on the top of a hill whence the nearest neighbor was out of sight.

But once within its modest portal, its habitues found themselves in the clearest fake atmosphere of a pleasure-loving decade. An organizing genius, sensitive to all those cheap adjuncts which usually grate on the soul hovering at the edge of the decline to Avernus, had plundered effectively an ignoble end and made of each small room an isle of forgetfulness; price, twenty-five bucks in advance, supper and drinks extra.

For the benefit of those who do not remember the epoch of the Greenwood hostelry and are consequently reading on and on in mortal dread of the paragraph that will introduce the War, let it be said at once, Forget it. Stake out the beginning of the international mix-up, hurl another boundary mark into November of 1918, and the time left outside of those limits will be found entirely sufficient to the needs of this chronicle. Let it further be noted that it is inconceivable that a single drop of the kind of blood which flowed in the veins of Mr. Robert Hervey Randolph could ever answer to the name of slacker, proof positive in itself that the events herein set forth happened when the War didn't.

Mr. Slim Hervey, chauffeur, was still plunged in reverie when his senses were assailed by a whiff of lilac, a mere nuance of perfume, that proclaimed the approach of Miss Madge Van Teller. He jumped out just in time to throw open the door of his car for the couple and take the murmured order of Mr. Beacher Tremont. "All right. Hit it up for Greenwood."

Luckily for the cabman's entertainment, his engine was working in silent perfection that night. The late hour gave him almost undisputed right of way so that driving became an automatic adjustment of his course in line with the curb and released his attention to gorge itself at leisure with eaves-dropping. By squirming his shoulders he managed to cock one ear over the top of his high overcoat collar; it was the ear next to the open speaking-slot.

"What a dream of a night," said the clear voice of Miss Van Teller. "Shall I be a traitor to my sex and betray one of its secrets to you?"

"Please do," murmured Mr. Tremont. From the very tone of his voice one could divine that he had slipped an arm around her and was holding her close.

"Well, it's this," she continued. "Women are not conquered by man alone, but by man and atmosphere. We never rush at the precipice; we flutter toward it with many stops and pauses. The stillest breezes of impulse may carry us on or a puff of unkind aid hold us back. It all really depends on the man imposing his atmosphere so steadily that the drifting soul of woman forgets its inborn title to vagrancy and sleepily assumes its enemy's goal."

"Madge," said Mr. Tremont almost earnestly, "you frighten me. I never knew you could talk like that. You frighten me because I have a terror of analyzed personal relations."

Randolph could hear a faint rustling of her robe as though she had nestled closer to her escort. "I never meant to startle you, Beacher," her voice continued, not quite so clear. Into its tone had crept, hesitatingly, a trace of unaccustomed emotion. "I was only warning you. Every man can make a world of his arms for one woman; not all can hold the illusion to beyond possession."

"I can, if you will only help me," whispered Tremont, and paused as though his own earnestness were taking him by surprise.

"I wonder," said Miss Van Teller. "You have played the right game. You have never said a vulgar thing to me or stooped to the usual hypocrisies; those are compliments by inference that have flattered the best that is in me. You have set the play in a high plane that winning, wins all of me; but—"

"But what?" asked Tremont.

"But there is danger in the high flight," finished Miss Van Teller. "An air-pocket in your atmosphere and, pouf! all is lost—the good in me that you will have missed as well as the bad that you could have won by a baser effort."

"What do you mean?" asked Tremont, no longer making the slightest effort to hide his awakened interest.

"I was thinking," said Miss Van Teller, dreamily, "that every woman is a group of three individuals. Shall I tell you their names?"

"Yes," said Tremont.

"The first," continued the girl, her voice floating from her as though carried on the bosom of her dream, "is called Flesh; the second, Spirit, and the third—the third I shall name the Veiled God."

"Madge!" cried Tremont, and Randolph, listening with all his ears, could almost feel the clutch on his own arms with which the man had seized the girl's, as though to drag her back from her mind's far distance.

"People wonder," she continued, her mood unbroken, "at the wreck of apparently perfect marriages and yet it's so simple to any woman that it's amazing that I should be the first to display our open secret. Only the

complete lover can be secure of his beloved, Beacher. He who wins her flesh alone leaves her spirit to betray him, and he who wins the spirit alone is in mortal danger of the woman of the flesh."

"The explanation," said Tremont, whimsically, "is so feminine that it confuses. If you had said that each woman is a trinity and must be thrice won before a man's honor can feel secure, understanding would be a sim-

ple matter. Did you leave out the Veiled God purposely or just to be different and avoid the obvious?"

"To avoid the obvious is an instinct of breeding," said Miss Van Teller, "and I would never blush for doing it; but where would your thoughts be now if I had said just what you expected. If I had treated the Veiled God as a matter of fact! Oh, no! One can clip with words the wings of flesh and spirit, but not of the Veiled God in woman, for its very essence is a deferred possession."

She paused, but as Tremont clung to the silence, she presently continued. "The complete lover is the man who having conquered all the heights of flesh and spirit in his mistress, dwells consciously in the presence of an undiscovered god and gazes out upon a broad and eternally promised never materially seized. Few are the men—few are the men—" Her voice trailed off as though her thoughts had run ahead of words and reached finally without the use of the spoken phrase.

"Few are the men who attain to that serene security," Tremont finished for her, only half conscious of what he was saying.

Randolph could hear the rustle of her turning to her companion. "How wonderful," she said. "That is what I thought, but didn't say."

"Madge," said Tremont, "what have you done? It's true that I have never stooped to hypocrisies with you and that I have never while with you spoken a vulgar word. Did you think that I have been knowingly wise? Well, I haven't. I didn't know until this moment why I chose a rare and high atmosphere to reach you. Now I know. It was because you were there. I chose only to come to you rather than drag you down to the drab of the usual. What you have done is to carry me higher than I ever meant to go. You have taken me off the beaten path and showed me an unexpected treasure. I'm no longer myself. I am cold and afraid."

Randolph could feel that the speaker was drawing away from the girl and a moment later his senses were to surpass themselves in additional divination. "You are afraid of that woman in me?" asked Miss Van Teller softly. "What about this one?" And then it was that Randolph's deductive antennae quivered under their burden of intelligence. He knew as certainly as though he had faced about that an adorable Madge, tender and wide-eyed, had slipped her bare arms around Beacher Tremont's neck and kissed him on the mouth.

There was a long silence; then came Tremont's voice, thick and strange to the ear. "A moment ago," it said, "I was afraid for you; now I'm afraid for myself. I am like a man who has carelessly dropped a lighted match and finds himself within the ring of a prairie fire. I can only wonder at my stupidity in thinking of you in connection with a casual possession and not as a consuming flame. You see? Already you have burned through the thin crust of lies that guards man from definite seizure by woman—any woman."

"Kiss me, Beacher," murmured the girl's voice as though his words had swirled around and by her, leaving her purpose untouched. "Take me and hold me carefully where no unkind air can drive me from you. Take all the women in me—one by one if you must."

At that moment Mr. Robert H. Randolph, in the person of Slim Hervey, chauffeur, very nearly wrecked his four-cylinder argosy with its burden of three fares, still individually and collectively indispensable to the continuity of this yarn. He missed the ditch by a hair's breath, caught his own with a gasp, returned to the middle of the broad highway and fixed his attention on a certain very definite matter with which it had been more or less constantly concerned ever since he had been directed to hit it up for Greenwood.

The road to that well-known hostelry was usefully devious and fares were seldom worried as to how any particular driver set out to find this choicest of needles in the hay-stack of the country inns that dot the landscape of Westchester and adjacent counties as long as he brought the search to a successful end somewhere this side of the pangs of hunger.

Nevertheless, had not Mr. Tremont, himself a motorist of no mean experience, been completely absorbed by the sudden discovery that he had his right arm around an entirely new world, he would have been struck inevitably by two things. First, that this was certainly not any one of the climbing roads to the Greenwood hostelry; second, that the man at the wheel knew more about losing his way in the vicinity of Manhattan and finding it again than did the combined roadmaps of the United States and all its allies—supposing it to have had allies at the time. However, Mr. Tremont's absorption was not only absolute but continuous so that it held him in its inexorable grip right up to the moment of ghastly awakening and even over the edge. He was just saying, "My darling, never fear. I'm taking you to a place so quiet and so guarded that this dream which you have dressed in an unexpected glory can flow on unbroken as long as we are true to it and to ourselves," when the cab drew up at a solemn and impressive portal.

Without leaving his seat, the cabman reached back, unlatched the door and threw it open. "Greenwood cemetery, sir," he barked.

The girl was first to grasp the words, the time and the place. "Oh!" she gasped, and in the sound of her cry Mr. Randolph could divine her whole body suddenly stiffening to a tense awakening and to the stabbing

memory of the last time she had come to this still place, her heart bursting with its long farewell to all that was left of her mother.

Then came Mr. Beacher Tremont's voice in old-time familiar tones. "Greenwood cemetery! Why, you triplicate blockhead!" said Greenwood hostelry. "Of all the d—n fools! What the devil—What the h—l—What the— What—"

He choked himself into a gulping inarticulate silence as he climbed from the cab to look in the face the sum total of all human stupidity. No sooner had he alighted than Miss Van Teller found herself in voice again. "Oh! oh!" she moaned, pressing her hands to her eyes, achingly open. "Take me away from here."

"Sure, miss," said Mr. Randolph promptly, threw in his clutch and was off.

"Hi, you! D—n you! Hey! You! Driver! Confound your d—d impudence! Hey! How am I going to get home?" The first of those cries was very plainly, the last very faintly heard by Mr. Randolph. After them came down the wind something that sounded very much like the ghost of a wall of despair, but the driver paid no heed. His attention was absorbed by something quite different; the dry sobs of a little heap of smoke-colored chiffon.

Devious, subterfuges and the finesse of the road-faker were swept from Randolph's mind; he made straight for the bridge and home, but long before they reached the river all sound had ceased to issue from the cab and in its stead reigned a purposeful, almost menacing silence. What was she thinking in there? What could she think? Why didn't she go right on crying and keep her mind fully occupied with that?

As they swept down the incline from the bridge into City Hall park he suddenly realized that he had been on the verge of giving himself away. He half turned his head and shouted through the speaking-slot, "What address, miss?"

Her voice came back to him from very close as though her face had been pressed to the glass in an effort to make him out. "At the corner of the Avenue and East Ninth street."

Ten minutes later he drew up his cab at the appointed spot and reached back to throw open the door, but kept his foot on the clutch release, leaving the gears in mesh, first speed ahead.

All his precautions were in vain. As he opened the cab door his coat sleeve was seized in a very determined grip and drawn inward, catching his elbow in a ju-jitsu leverage that left him the Hobson's choice of either getting out and facing his captor or listening to his arm break. He chose to get down from his seat quickly.

"Well, Bobby," murmured Miss Van T.

Mr. Randolph attempted no evasion; he handed the lady to the curb and guided her gently toward her own door and up the high steps. "Madge," he said, "you fought a great fight tonight and when you had won you felt sorry for Tremont and surrendered. You were swept too high on the wave of the best that is in you. Promise me that you won't forget that you have won. Promise me that you will wait and take Tremont, all of him, with honor."

"What do you mean? What did you hear?" cried Miss Van T. angrily, her pale face suddenly flushing.

"From the start of the ride to the finish I heard every word," declared Mr. Randolph frankly, "and more."

"And more!" repeated the hard-pressed girl. "What do you mean by more?" She still tried to browbeat him, but remembering one incredibly long kiss, her eyes fell in the unequal battle with Bobby's and attempted to create diversion by staring at his gartered legs and heavily booted feet.

"Look up, Madge. Look at me," said Mr. Randolph and waited patiently until first her long lashes fluttered and then her lovely eyes swept slowly up to his face. "That's it," he continued as their looks met and locked.

"Let's hold that so we can't lie." "Everything?" asked Miss Van T., and suddenly smiled.

"Madge, you little devil," said Mr. Randolph, suppressing an impulse to shake her, "can you think of what you've been doing and laughing?"

"Yes, I can, just now," said Miss Van T., in little gasping phrases that to a man, especially one of Mr. Randolph's limpid nature, carried only their face value in words, but which to any woman would have read as plainly as the red-weather signal, "Look out for showers of tears followed by storm."

"Well," said Mr. Randolph solemnly, "if you really don't realize just where you have been, let me tell you. First you flew high into clean air and you took Tremont with you. You were possessed of a vision and you made him see it, too, a mirage of those lifted places that are the altar of the mind before love. Just a mirage, an illusion of perfect happiness, which cold reason tells us we can't ever turn into reinforced concrete and plant in the yard, but which we must either forever hold as a vision or admit that love is a sordid and wingless thing."

Miss Van Teller's eyes fell from his frank gaze. Something seemed to crumple within her; she put her arms around Mr. Randolph's neck, clung to him, dropped her face against his shoulder and sobbed, not noisily, but as one who weeps to rest.

He held her close to him and went on, his face set as though to a duty. "Then what did you do? Because he hesitated, merely hesitated at the high door of adoration, you promptly slammed it and dropped plumb

straight down like that Traitor archangel Johnny out of heaven into the arms of hell."

"Bobby!" cried Miss Van T., throwing back her head and struggling to release herself. "How dare you say a thing like that! How dare you be here, anyway? I hate you. I don't know how I ever could have thought I loved you. I fell, but it was into Beacher's arms, and I wish I was there right now." More sobs, convulsive ones, that shook the slim body in Mr. Randolph's embrace from twitching shoulder to tired feet.

Least the reader be startled by what's coming next it will do well to remind him that this poignant scene was staged at three o'clock in the morning on the high stoop of the Van Teller residence in East Ninth street and never left the perimeter of the dorm-room which in itself presented an almost feminine contradiction, in that it bore, down in red on its face, the word "Welcome," but was nevertheless padlocked and chained to the iron railing.

Even as Miss Van Teller was sobbing her heart out and Mr. Randolph was standing in the bewilderment of one who knows he has not only taken the wrong turning but placed both his feet in a beartrap, a thick, heavy, unsympathetic voice arose from the foot of the steps.

"Here! Youse! Break away an' come along of me."

Memories of a mischievous boyhood swarmed to Mr. Randolph's mind, recollections of those days when, as chief of the Madison Square gang his ears had tingled to the cry of "Cheese it, de ev! We're pinched, fellers!" A cold sweat came out upon his brow; he slowly relaxed his grip on Miss Van T.'s person and whispered tremulously to her to keep her nerve but hand him her latchkey.

Over his shoulder he said with forced calm, "On what charge, officer?"

"Same old dope," replied the policeman phlegmatically; "drunken, disorderly. Come along, now, er d'yer want me to climb them steps so's we c'n all roll down together?"

During that speech Mr. Randolph made a lucky shot at the keyhole, stealthily turned the lock and opened the door. "The way's clear, Madge," he whispered. "Beat it."

"Oh, is it, Bobby, you dear," rattled Miss Van T. in a stage whisper that could be heard across the street. "I didn't mean it, really, what I said about hating you. But I do love Beacher, Bobby, and I'll—I'll—"

"For heaven's sake, Madge," growled Mr. Randolph, hearing sounds as of a bear starting to swarm a tree, "keep all that till New Year's."

"I was just going to say," continued Miss Van T. breathlessly but with a

ow coming up the steps, "that I'll owe it to you, Bobby. I'll owe it to you. D'you understand?"

"Sure," led Mr. Randolph as he pushed her firmly through the door, then caught its knob, slammed it shut and turned to meet Nemesis. "Hello, Flahaharty!"

The huge policeman stopped his ponderous but sure progression and stared long and suspiciously into Mr. Randolph's face. Finally he gave a grunt of recognition. "Slim," he said to himself aloud as though somewhere within his vast bulk there were a separate monitor that had to be tipped off to the situation, "Slim Hervey."

"Sure," said Mr. Randolph, leading the way toward his wagon. "Who else did you think it was at this time o' night?"

"How did I know," demanded Mr. Flahaharty gruffly but not unpleasantly for him, "as you had taken on deliveries o' fancy dress-goods on top o' your regular line?"

He breathed heavily and allowed his eyes to protrude farther than usual in search of a thought which he sensed in the near distance. "I tell you, Slim," he finally continued, "I don't know what this burg is a-comin' to. Why, even the street kind used to have a man to take 'em home, but this here was a bit o' high-flyin' stuff—me, I could see that—an' they had to give it to a cab!"

"Forget it," said Bobby nervously. "All I says," continued Mr. Flahaharty, "is thank God both o' my galls is married to hairy men that can an' does lick the stuffin' outen 'em."

"Well, here we are," said Mr. Randolph as he stooped to turn her over. From his seat behind the wheel he began to breathe more easily and leaned out to study the face of his friend, the officer, to make sure that therein was no guile.

"Cheer up, Jim," he said not quite reassured. "Forget it."

"I'll try," said Mr. Flahaharty dubiously, "but it'll come hard, bein' the first time I ever seen a thing like that. She sure give you a tussle, Slim!"

(Continued in Next Issue)

### OH, GRAVE, THY VICTORY?

A group of told-timers had been caught red-handed at dice by the village preacher, who had delivered a broadside on the evils of gambling. When he was through one recalcitrant drawled:

"Say, parson, you ever shot craps?"

"I should say not."

"You ever had a pair of dice in your hands?"

"Emphatically, no!"

"Well, then, what you want to come around talkin' to us about paradise for?"

This decision about moving your Nicker is a good deal like the famous recipe for cooking rabbit.

Even if you have no coal in your basement it may be a comfort to know there is plenty of it in the mines.